Unit .27

Session .02

Jesus Encounters Two Disciples

Scripture

Luke 24:17-27, 30-35

17 Then he asked them, "What is this dispute that you're having with each other as you are walking?" And they stopped walking and looked discouraged. **18** The one named Cleopas answered him, "Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who doesn't know the things that happened there in these days?" **19** "What things?" he asked them. So they said to him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet powerful in action and speech before God and all the people, **20** and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. **21** But we were hoping that he was the one who was about to redeem Israel. Besides all this, it's the third day since these things happened. **22** Moreover, some women from our group astounded us. They arrived early at the tomb, **23** and when they didn't find his body, they came and reported that they had seen a vision of angels who said he was alive. **24** Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they didn't see him." **25** He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! **26** Wasn't it necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter into his glory?" **27** Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures. … **30** It was as he reclined at the table with them that he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. **31** Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight. **32** They said to each other, "Weren't our hearts burning within us while he was talking with us on the road and explaining the Scriptures to us?" **33** That very hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem. They found the Eleven and those with them gathered together, **34** who said, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" **35** Then they began to describe what had happened on the road and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Intro Options

Main Point:
Jesus is the central focus of Scripture and our worship.

Option 1

"Bro, do you even lift?" is a meme that's been around a while; it's used when someone is talking about something they supposedly know a lot about, but another person questions him or her. Your students are to imagine they are putting on a TV show entitled, "Bro, Are You Even a Fan?" that plays off the same concept.

Essentially, the game show is trying to find who is the biggest fan among a group of contestants. In small groups or alone, students should make up the intro for their fan-contestant; this will be the speech that the broadcaster reads over the loudspeaker as the contestant approaches the stage; it should be a short paragraph iterating what makes this contestant such a great fan. They can also draw or impersonate their supposed contestant; what would he or she look like?

Contestants can be fans of anything. Fans of sports teams come to mind quickly, but they could be fans of food, celebrities, bands, art, music, towns, movies, shows, video games, whatever.

Give students some time to prepare their paragraphs and impersonations (if desired) and then read them (or put on a short segment of the show where you introduce the contestants).

Discuss what similarities you saw across all the fans. Chances are that excitement and enthusiasm were constants; probably they even "evangelized" their particular love, trying to tell others how great their thing was.

In today's lesson, we'll encounter two disciples who encountered the risen Jesus, and we'll see how they became enthusiastic, evangelistic "fans" (and more than fans!) of Jesus after encountering Him.

Option 2

Come up with a list of riddles to offer your students (you can search for these online beforehand). Run them by your students and see how well they do in terms of figuring them out.

Point out that riddles are really confusing when you first encounter them. At some point, though, when you get the answer, everything makes sense. Likewise, we can find the Scriptures really confusing. We'll see in today's lesson that when we realize that Jesus is the centerpiece of the Scriptures, however, they make much more sense. We'll still have some questions, but at least we will see how Scripture fits together.

TEACHING PLAN

Read Luke 24:17-24.

Luke doesn't tell us exactly what the two disciples were discussing as they were traveling, but we can glean that they probably didn't fully understand all that happened concerning the events that just took place. They had hoped Jesus would be the One to redeem Israel, indicating that they knew some prophecies about the Messiah. Yet, Jesus was not the ruling King who would bring deliverance from the oppressive rule of other nations as they expected. The deliverance Jesus brought was far better than they could have imagined.

The two disciples felt anything but peace as Jesus joined them on the road. In their understanding of the Scriptures, the Messiah was supposed to reign, not die. He was to be King, not a humble carpenter with no home to call His own. These men knew the reports from the women of the empty tomb, but they still hadn't connected the dots. They still couldn't see the big picture of what happened, and what was happening.

- **Why does God allow us to endure times of sorrow and confusion? How does it affect us to know that He is with us, even if He seems hidden or disguised?**

There's no question that the disciples were extremely upset and sorrowful over the weekend's events. Furthermore, even in knowing their sorrow and confusion, Jesus still decided to prevent them from recognizing Him (at least for a short while) in order for them to learn certain things first. This time of heartache was a teachable moment for them and can be for us as well. Whatever our circumstances, we can be sure of the fact that Jesus will never leave nor abandon us.

Read Luke 24:25-27.

Jesus expressed disappointment that the two disciples failed to understand what the Scriptures said. The combination of "foolish" and "slow" states they were slow to accept by faith what the Scriptures taught about the Messiah.

The reference to Moses and other prophets referred to the Hebrew Bible—what Christians today refer to as the Old Testament. In Jesus' day, the Old Testament was read as a story in search of a conclusion. The Jewish people in Jesus' day were waiting for the last chapter in their story to begin. Essentially, Jesus said to Cleopas and the other disciple, "I am the one who brings the story to its completion. I am the focus of all the Scriptures."

99 Essential Doctrines (p. 88, DDG)

Clarity of Scripture

Because God gave us His Word as authoritative in all matters related to life and faith, we believe His Word was written in a way that can be understood with the help of the Holy Spirit. Believing the Scriptures are clear does not mean that every part is equally easy to interpret, neither does it mean we will never make mistakes in our interpretation. It does mean that with God's help, people are capable of understanding the biblical text for themselves as they employ correct methods of interpretation.

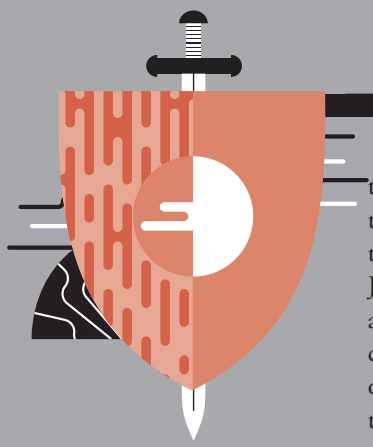
COMMENTARY

Main Point:
Jesus is the central focus of Scripture and our worship.

Luke 24

15-16. Luke gives us "insider information" that the two travelers did not know—that the identity of the man who joined them was Jesus (vv. 15- 16). The passive voice of the verb, "were prevented," suggests that someone other than the disciples was responsible for their blindness. Presumably, Jesus looked similar after His resurrection as He did before. So, God supernaturally prevented their eyes from recognizing Him. They likely assumed this man was just another worshiper returning home from Jerusalem.

17-24. "The description of Jesus by the two disciples is short on both insight and faith. Jesus is referred to in relation to his hometown (Nazareth) and as a prophet and miracle worker, but not as the Son of God. In addition, nothing is said about the unjust nature of Jesus's betrayal, trials, and crucifixion—just that the chief priests and leaders got him sentenced to death and crucified. These disciples had not fully grasped Jesus's identity, nor had they understood the divine necessity of his death … Jesus's death had dashed these disciples' hopes that he was the Messiah (the one … to redeem Israel), but the reports from the tomb that morning astounded them and made them wonder what was going on. The reports said: (1) the women disciples didn't find Jesus's body at the tomb, (2) the women had seen a vision of angels proclaiming his resurrection, and (3) some male disciples had verified that the tomb was indeed empty."[2]



In Defense (p. 90, DDG)

"A note of doubt ends the summary by the Emmaus travelers: the disciples who went to the tomb did not see Jesus (24:12). Luke here notes that more than one disciple went to the tomb, which agrees with John 20:3-10. This difference suggests that Luke is stringing together pieces of tradition into a unified account. To those now walking unknowingly with Jesus, the decisive piece of empirical evidence was lacking, an appearance by Jesus … They are like modern people in their skepticism. Only the presence of the raised Jesus would convince them of what happened. The irony of the narrative is that they are in the midst of what they desired and what the others had not experienced … The story is told so that the reader shares the irony. The travelers' report of recent events ends with a note of pathos, though the reader knows that the emotions are uncalled for, since the reader already knows that Jesus is with them (24:15-16). These travelers are aware that unusual events have taken place, but unfortunately the decisive evidence was lacking. They are about to find out what Luke's readers already know."[3]

TEACHING PLAN

As Jesus walked with the disciples on the road, He revealed to them how they should interpret the Old Testament. Through the Holy Spirit illuminating Scripture, we, like the early disciples, are enabled to read all of Scripture in light of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension—the good news that God is working to make all things new, a plan that had been in place since before the foundations of the world is the hope of our faith.

Likewise, we too are able to read God's Word, from beginning to end, through the lens of the gospel. Ever since the beginning, Scripture pointed forward to the One who would eventually crush the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15) and be the ultimate sacrifice to atone for sin as foreshadowed in Israel's temple and tabernacle practices. Jesus is the Passover Lamb (Ex. 12) and the Suffering Servant (Isa. 52:13–53:12). He is the Prince of Peace and the King of Glory who will come again.

- **Consider the storyline of Scripture: creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. How does Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension inform each element of this storyline?**
- **Consider some of the famous stories in the Old Testament. In what ways do they point to Christ? Why is it important to see Bible stories in their relation to Christ?**
- **How does this story highlight the importance of personal devotion time in the Word?**

Read Luke 24:30-35.

Imagine the disciples' surprise when they discovered that the One whose explanation of Scripture set their hearts ablaze turned out to be their risen King! It wasn't until Jesus broke bread with His disciples that their eyes opened to who had been standing in front of them. This breaking of bread that was such a familiar happening was also a key illustration pointing to Jesus' death and resurrection, instituted at the Last Supper. The broken bread was a picture of Jesus' body and the wine was a picture of His blood. As they enjoyed a meal together, the two disciples understood their risen Savior sat with them.

- **What do you think the men meant when they said that their hearts were burning while they walked with Jesus? Why do you think Jesus made Himself known to them in this way? How would you respond if you were with these two disciples?**

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
Jesus is the central focus of Scripture and our worship.

Luke 24

25-27. Our challenge, as disciples of Jesus Christ, is to read the Old Testament Scriptures in light of His death and resurrection. We can do this well by asking three questions every time we read a passage from the Old Testament.

First, ask: Does anything in this passage point directly to Jesus? A few places in the Old Testament speak directly about the coming Messiah, such as Genesis 49:10-12, Isaiah 9:6, and Micah 5:2, to name a few. Of course, direct prophecies of Jesus do not occur in every passage, but you will find them throughout the Old Testament.

Second, ask: Does anything in this passage foreshadow or anticipate Jesus? Sometimes the most powerful way to communicate is through subtlety. In addition to direct prophecies, the Old Testament foreshadows Jesus in subtle, indirect ways. For example, knowing that the Gospel of Matthew begins by identifying Jesus as "the Son of David" and "the Son of Abraham" (Matt. 1:1), we can look for ways that events in David and Abraham's lives anticipate who Jesus is and what Jesus would do. Abraham's "sacrifice" of Isaac in Genesis 22 foreshadowed the sacrifice of Jesus. Jesus's love for His enemies was indicated by David's love for Mephibosheth—a potential enemy given that he was descendant of King Saul (2 Sam. 9; Rom. 5:8).

Third, ask: How does the gospel of Jesus shape my understanding of this passage? The Old Testament is full of wise sayings, principles, and commands. The Apostle Paul made it clear that these still have relevance for us as followers of Jesus Christ. However, we can only understand how these wise sayings, principles, and commands apply when we read them through the lens of Jesus' life and teaching. He came to bring the Old Testament to its complete expression (Matt. 5:17).

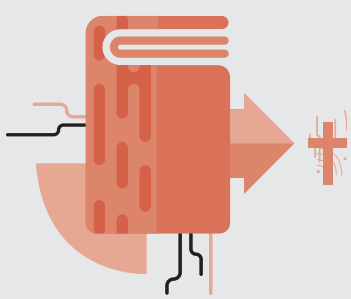
Activity

The lesson today shows a progression: the disciples start with discouragement and confusion; they encounter Jesus in the Scriptures; their affections are stirred; they are moved to action. Students should consider and make a comic or skit of how these four steps might look in their own lives. They should incorporate each of the four steps: discouragement/confusion; Jesus in the Scriptures; emotion stirred up; action taken. For example, they might be discouraged because they goofed up a solo at a concert; they go to Jesus in the Scriptures and find their worth rests in Him, not in their performance; they are stirred with affection for this beautiful Jesus; they continue to improve their instrumental playing so they can use it to minister to others.

Let the students share then debrief by talking about where in the four steps students might be.

(p. 89, DDG) Christ Connection

On the road to Emmaus, the risen Jesus explained how the Old Testament Scriptures pointed forward to His suffering and glory. Like the disciples, we read the whole Bible in light of Christ's death and resurrection, focusing our attention on the gospel that lies at the heart of God's written Word to us.



LIFEWISE
Middle School

LESSON 75: DISCERNMENT
JESUS ENCOUNTERS TWO DISCIPLES

Luke 24:17:27, 30-35

JESUS ENCOUNTERS TWO DISCIPLES

Jesus is the central focus of Scripture and our worship.

JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus explained to His followers how the Old Testament pointed forward to His suffering and glory. Like the disciples, we must recognize that it is the gospel, the truth about Christ's death and resurrection, that helps us fully understand all of God's written Word.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

DISCERNMENT – Being able to recognize what is true and false or right and wrong.

HEAD

What did Jesus explain to the disciples before He revealed Himself to them?

What did the disciples do after Jesus prayed and disappeared?

HEART

Jesus used the Old Testament to help the disciples understand the events they had just lived through. How can reading and understanding the Bible help us discern what is true and right in our world or in difficult circumstances?

Many people believe that hard situations and confusing problems prove God doesn't exist or doesn't love us. Do you agree or disagree? Why might God allow difficulties into our lives and how might He use them for our good (Romans 8:28)?

HANDS

Discernment helps us tell the truth from lies and right from wrong so that we can choose to live God's way. It always involves comparing what is said or done with what is true, rather than taking everything at face value. Complete one of the activities below to practice discernment this week:

- Read three articles or watch three videos about the same current event, new study or important person. How are they the same? How are they different? How could you fact check them? Share what you learn with a friend or mentor (parent, teacher, coach).

- Imagine that your friend shares something (online or in real life) that isn't true about someone you have a class with. Consider why you disagree with them. How can you respond wisely?

- Think of a situation or issue that causes you to worry or be anxious. Write down your thoughts without editing, and then read it again out loud. Use one color to mark what you wrote that is factually true and provable and a different color to mark what you don't know for sure or can't prove. What do you notice? Share what you discover with a friend or trusted adult.